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SUBJECT: OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL: STATEMENT ON THE GENEVA
DISCUSSIONS

¶1. (U) Post is authorized to present the following statement
at the February 4, 2010 Permanent Council meeting in Vienna.

Begin text:

Thank you, Mister Chairman,

The United States was pleased to participate in the January
28 round of the Geneva discussions on security and stability
arrangements in Georgia.

We welcome the co-chairs' efforts to identify interim steps
that can both improve the security, humanitarian, and human
rights situation on the ground and lay the groundwork for
more far-reaching arrangements. One such step, the Incident
Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRM), provides an
important forum for addressing issues of concern on a regular
and pragmatic basis in the Abkhazia and South Ossetia
regions. Unfortunately, the operation of the IPRM for the
South Ossetia region has been suspended for three months. We
call on all participants to agree to reconvene this important
mechanism without delay.

Although the conflict region has stabilized to a great
extent, violent incidents persist, and civilians continue to
face a precarious humanitarian and human rights situation.
We continue to believe the OSCE and other international
actors that an international presence throughout Georgia is
critical to addressing these problems and urge the
re-establishment of a robust OSCE presence there.

As we work to improve the security and humanitarian situation
in Georgia, we will continue to call for the parties to the
conflict to comply with their obligations under international
humanitarian law; to urge respect for the human rights of all
individuals in the conflict areas; to call for free and
unhindered access to the whole of Georgia; and to seek the
safe, dignified, and voluntary return of internally displaced
persons and refugees.

We welcome the Georgian Government's adoption of a new
strategy of engagement with the Abkhazia and South Ossetia
regions -- a potentially constructive step towards easing
tensions and a way to reach out to all the regions'
residents.

We also welcome the upcoming visit to Georgia of the
Chairman-in-Office. We hope Foreign Minister Saudabayev will
be successful in furthering discussions of key issues,
including water and gas supplies in the South Ossetia region,
the re-establishment of an OSCE presence in Georgia, and a
follow-up to the November 2008 joint ODIHR/HCNM report on
human rights in the war-affected areas of Georgia. We look
forward to a report on the foreign minister's trip and to the
Chairmanship's continued engagement on these issues.

As Secretary Clinton stated last week, we have repeatedly
called on the Russian Federation to honor the terms of its

cease-fire agreement with Georgia. Russia committed not only to withdraw its troops to positions held prior to the start of hostilities, but also to provide free access for humanitarian assistance to the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions of Georgia. We remind the Russian Federation that its characterization of these regions as independent does not relieve it of these commitments.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, let me reiterate our firm commitment to Georgia's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

Thank you.

END TEXT
CLINTON